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Press Release HR/1652
15 February 1985

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONTINUES DEBATE ON RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

The Commission on Human Rights this afternoon continued debate on the right of people to self-determination and the application of this right to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation.

Speakers this afternoon were: Uganda, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Democratic Yemen, Israel, Algeria, Democratic Kampuchea, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ukrainian SSR, Austria, China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Germany, Federal Republic of, German Democratic Republic, Syrian Arab Republic.

The representatives of Christian Democratic International, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, SWAPO, Pax Romana, Pax Christ International also spoke.

Also this afternoon, the Commission had before it a 28-Nation draft resolution on the situation in Afganistan. This would have the Commission voice concern over the situation in that country, and call for the withdrawal of foreign troops in order to re-establish peace there.

The Commission will meet again at 10 a.m. on Monday, 18 February.

Bernard ODOCH-JATO (Uganda) said that last weekend at Soweto, Ms. Zinzi Mandela said her father Nelson Mandela had rejected an offer of release on condition he would renounce armed struggle against apartheid. Her father, she said, would not negotiate his release until South Africa itself had abandoned apartheid.

The struggle against apartheid, said Mr. Odoch-Jato, was a struggle for life. It was a fight to free people from subjugation and degradation. The situation in Namibia and South Africa remained agonising. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group showed that the policies and practices of apartheid were assuming genocidal proportions.

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The aggression had carried out incursions into Thailand and attacked unarmed civilians and refugees, showing it had no sincerity in finding a political solution. Vietnam tried to justify its actions because of the so-called threat from China; but only exposed their own hypocrisy in ignoring international obligations. The key to a solution of the question lay in the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops to allow Kampucheans to choose their own political system.

Nguyen THUONG (Vietnam) welcomed the progress made in the past 25 years in the field of self-determination. However, colonialism was continuing. Former colonial Powers were violating the rights of self-determination of peoples. Major Powers had been exercising state terrorism. One example was Nicaragua, where imperialist pressure was continuing.

His Government supported the liberation struggles against imperialist forces throughout the world, as in the Middle East, Latin America and southern Africa.

His country stood behind Cuba and Nicaragua and other Latin American States in their resistance to United States imperialism, he stated. He condemned the occupation of Grenada and other United States acts of aggression in Latin America as well as elsewhere. He fully supported the struggle of the Palestine people under the PLO in their struggle against the Israeli occupants, he stated. His delegation supported the proposal of the Soviet Union for a Conference on the Middle East to include the PLO. It also supported SWAPO, ANC and the Afghan people in their struggle for freedom and self-determination as well as the struggle of the Korean people for unity and of Western Sahara for self-determination.

Concerning Kampuchea, he said that if there was still a problem after six years it was because it had been artificially created. Imperialist and hegemonist forces were seeking to prevent the peoples of three countries of Indochina from finding their own solution to their problems. They were carrying out an undeclared war of attrition against the Kampuchean people and other Indochinese proples. His Government would withdraw its forces from Kampuchea when the time came. It had no objection to friendly and cunstructive relations with Thailand and other neighbouring countries.

Ms. Luisa PEREIRA, representative of Pax Romana, said the people of Timor had not been given an opportunity to express their wishes. They were undergoing one of the most painful experiences in history. The Indonesian troops had committed many violations of human rights. Fundamental rights were being denied. The people were being thrown into concentration camps, and were subjected to torture.

Indonesia continued to insist that the situation in East Timor was improving. The fact was that Indonesia was trying to dominate the situation, an attempt which the people were resisting.

The suffering in that country would not stop until the fighting stopped, she said. The recognition of the people's right to self-determination was a necessary prerequisite for a solution to the problem.

Andrien-Claude ZOLLER, representative of Pax Christi International), said in Afghanistan massive violations of the human rights of civilians were occupying. The three gravest problems posed by foreign intervention consisted of brutal reprisal massacres in villages, torture and summary execution of prisoners, and the five million displaced refugees.

The situation in East Timor was even more dramatic. Three heavily armed Indonesian forces used inhuman practices against civilians, including torture and disappearances. Between 1974 and 1983, the population was reduced by 250,000 people. Indonesia urged that the East Timor people opted for annexation. But this argument was far from reality. The world community should intervene before it was too late. Efforts should be made to end the conflict by negotiations involving all the parties. For the situation in East Timor bordered on genocide.

A.H.S. Ataul KARIM (Bangladesh) stated that the right of self-determination as enunciated in the United Nations Charter could be understood in two ways: firstly the right to choose freely its political, economic, social and cultural systems; and secondly, the right of a people to constitute itself into a state.

The rapid emergence of new independent states in the world had given rise to hopes and unprecedented aspirations among the freedom loving peoples of the world, he said. The most critical issues of self-determination today concerned Palestine, South Africa, Namibia, Afghanistan and Kampuchea. His delegation had already placed on record its position on the self-determination of the peoples of Palestine, South Africa and Namibia.

On Afghanistan, he said his delegation continued to be convinced that the withdrawal of all foreign forces from this country was imperative for a just and lasting settlement. The Afghan people should be restored their inalienable right to choose freely their own form of political, social and economic system. Bangladesh saw no alternative to a comprehensive settlement based on the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

On Kampuchea, he said, the people had been undergoing untold sufferings due to the occupation by foreign forces. There too, he said there was no alternative to a comprehensive political solution, based on the fundamental principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and a process of genuine negotiation and mutual accommodation.

Wilhelm HOYNCK (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the peaceful realization of the right to self-determination of nations was fundamental to his country's foreign policy. The individual's right to development was enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The right of peoples to self-determination and the observance of the individual's basic right were inextricably linked.

The international community was faced with situations in which this right was denied. The United Nations should be vigilant to ensure that the old form of colonialism was not replaced by an ideologically motivated colonialism. The Commission had a duty to address itself to situations where the right to self-determination was violated in southern Africa, Middle East, Afghanistan, Kampuchea and elsewhere.

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